

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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FOR SEC VANCE AND ADMIN GILLIGAN FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, LI
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PRLBLEMS-POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION.

REF: STATE 107370

SUMMARY: TO REDRESS THE GROWTH IMBALANCE BETWEEN FOOLD PRODUCTION
AND CONSUMPTION, THE GOL HAS AFFRIMED A STRONG NATIONAL COMMIT-
MENT TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD BY THE END OF 1980. REGRETABLELY,
GOL HAS SOFT-PEDALED POPULATION/FAMILY PLANNING, THUS INDICATING A
FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THAT INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WITH-
OUT CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH OFFERS ONLY TEMPORARY OR PARTIAL
SOLUTION. THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS STAFF PLAN TO USE EVERY
OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY OUR CONERN ON THIS MATTER TO THE
PRESIDENT AND SENIOR GOL OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY

1. A CONTINUING DIALOGUE ON THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN CARRIED ON BY
MEMBERS OF THE U.S. MISSION AND LIBERIAN OFFICIALS. RECENTLY,
THE AMBASSADOR HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING UP WITH PRESIDENT
TOLBERT ISSUES OF FOOD AND POPULATION. THE PRESIDENT THEN
REITERATED A STRONG NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN
FOOD. IN A SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
CHENOWETH, THIS HIGH LEVEL COMMITMENT WAS REAFFIRMED BOTH IN
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TERMS OF GENERAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD PRODUCTION. THE GOL
HAS ISSUED A POLICY STATEMENT THAT THERE WILL BE NO MORE IMPORTA-
TION OF RICE AFTER 1980. TO THIS END GOL IS MAKING COMMENDABLE
EFFORTS TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY RICE. MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE IS ASSISTING FARMERS TO PLANT HIGH YIELDING
VARIETY OF UPLAND RICE AND TO GROW PADDY RICE IN SWAMPLANDS.
THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO IMPLEMENTING AT LEAST TWO LARGE RICE

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING (PFP) IN LIBERIA, REGRETTABLY, HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY. THERE IS A FEELING BY THE LEADERSHIP THAT THE COUNTRYSIDE IS UNDER-POPULATED. HIGH INFANT MORTALITY RATE INCREASES DESIRE TO HAVE LARGE FAMILIES TO PROVIDE EXTRA HANDS, ESPECIALLY FOR AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS, AND A FORM OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR OLD AGE. THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP HAS AN INADEQUATE APPRECIATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN LIBERIA.

3. THE GOVERNMENT HAS, HOWEVER, NOT DISCOURAGED PFP ACTIVITIES BY A SMALL NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS. THE USAID SUPPORTED LOFA COUNTY RURAL HEALTH PROJECT HAS ITS FAMILY PLANNING COMPONENT. WHO HAS A FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM IN GRAND CAPE MOUNT COUNTY, WHILE THE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION IS WORKING IN MONROVIA AND IN SEVEN LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL. PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR ARE ALSO ACTIVE IN PFP.

4. OUR USAID DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS INVOLVE FOOD AND POPULATION ACTIVITIES. THE LOFA AND BONG COUNTIES INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE AND INTEGRATED RURAL HEALTH SYSTEMS ARE THE PRINCIPAL USAID PROJECTS WHICH HELP TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF CROPS, IMPROVE NUTRITION AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FAMILY PLANNING.

5. IN OUR CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH GOL LEADERS WE PLAN TO EMPHASIZE PFP AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED IN THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. WE PLAN TO COORDINATE OUR APPROACH WITH OTHER DONORS SO THAT THE MESSAGE WILL BE REINFORCED BY THEM. THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS SENIOR STAFF WILL USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BRING THIS MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

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